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CHARLES D. STANTON, *Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean*. (Warfare in History.) Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2011. Pp. x, 323; b&w figs. \$95. ISBN: 9781843836247. doi:10.1017/S0038713413000444

Essentially, Charles D. Stanton's *Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean* is a military history of medieval Sicily. While the book's chronological span is marked by the Arab conquest of the island in the ninth century and the passing of Norman Sicily into the hands of the Hohenstaufen dynasty in the late twelfth century, Stanton's narrative concentrates on the naval activities of the Normans in their attempts to conquer and keep the island in the intervening centuries. One basic assumption guides the book's argument: Sicily's geographical position in the center of the Mediterranean permitted its rulers to exercise economic control over most of the basin. With this in mind, Stanton turns Sicily into a military asset and therefore imposes purpose on all Norman military activity in southern Italy. From the very outset, Stanton's Normans were "mercenaries bent on conquest" who saw the acquisition of southern Italy as a means to secure the central Mediterranean: "they had horses, they had hauberks, and they were there to stay" (27). One problem with the maritime teleology of this argument is that the Normans were not very maritime to begin with and that, as Stanton explains in the introduction, their naval abilities had to be acquired in the process of conquering Sicily. It is one thing to conquer territory but quite another to view oneself as future rulers of the Mediterranean without actually knowing the first thing about naval warfare. Stanton's implied argument—that the conquest of Sicily gave rise to the Normans' future naval expertise—is much more compelling.

*Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean* is divided into four chapters, the first three of which treat the rise and decline of Norman Sicily, while the last chapter evaluates the historical impact of the Normans' presence on the Mediterranean island. Chapter 1, "The Conquest," actually tells the story of two conquests: the island's subjugation first by the Arabs and then by the Normans. Although the various naval confrontations are meticulously described and evaluated, the opening chapter's penchant for military idiom generates an unflatteringly anachronistic representation of the North Africans. And so, the Arab and Berber population of southern Italy is repeatedly referred to as "Saracen," as in "open discord among the 'Saracens' of Sicily" (23). Surely, most of these references stem from the chronicle sources used by Stanton, yet occasionally one has the impression that this chapter absorbs some of the cruder elements of the source material, so that the reader frequently encounters "Muslim marauders" (18) and learns that Roger de Hauteville "drove the marauders into the sea" (26) and his brother Robert "cut off his prey completely" (41), whereas "the Muslim emir ended up at the bottom of the harbor" (26). In a narrative that is not in the least concerned with religious differences and cultural identities it can be distracting to see North Africans repeatedly defined as "Muslims" whereas the clearly differentiated Europeans are rarely if ever called "Christians." Ironically, one chronicler refers to the Normans as "we" and to their North African enemies simply as "the Sicilians" (36).

Chapter 2, "The Apogee," discusses the heyday of the Norman kingdom of Sicily under the Hautevilles. Again, the book's strength lies in the intelligent and informed dissection of naval operations. In fact, the clarity of Stanton's prose and his incisive analyses make the complex reconstruction of military operations from often fragmented and biased sources appear effortless. This chapter presents the various military undertakings of the Normans in the Mediterranean, in Greece, and in North Africa as a series of endeavors to consolidate and expand their control of the region.

In the third chapter, "The Eclipse," the reader witnesses how the next generation of Hautevilles deployed their naval prowess across the entire region: in the span of only

*Speculum* 88.1 (January 2013)

fourteen years, William II staged military operations in the Balearics, Greece, Asia Minor, Cyprus, and the Levant, stretching Norman resources from the very west to the very east of the Mediterranean. Here, the decline of Norman maritime power is blamed on poor military decisions, bungled naval operations, and quixotic expeditions. Although the analysis of the numerous military campaigns is sound and even trenchant at times, the one-dimensional representation of everything that is not military—coupled with a linear narrative of conquest, rise, and decline—creates the impression that cultural, political, and economic developments can be reduced to a set of military policies. For instance, Stanton maintains that Roger II's flourishing, wealthy, and multicultural Sicily solely rested on three (military) pillars: "(1) the consolidation of his reign on the mainland in the face of a rebellious nobility ... (2) the defense of the realm against Byzantine designs and (3) the expansion of Norman power on the Maghrib coast of North Africa" (67). I do not wish to deny that these policies were important for the Norman tenure of Sicily, but surely the decision not to suppress the island's multiethnic population—consisting mostly of Arabs, Berbers, and Greeks—must be counted among one of the Normans' most remarkable *strategic* feats. And when Robert de Hauteville appoints a Norman knight as *amiratus* in Salerno, Stanton states that the choice of the traditional Arabic title ("emir") was "merely ... a palliative for his new Muslim subjects" (46). The mobility and adaptability of Norman identity—*Normannitas*—has emerged as an important area in the field over the last ten years, and it would have inflected Stanton's narrative with a valuable political and cultural dimension.

The final chapter assesses the long-term impact of the Norman presence in Sicily. Once more, the criteria are exclusively military, even though the consequences belong to *grand récit*: "The rise of Norman sea power in the central Mediterranean ... irrevocably transformed the geopolitical and economic impetus on the sea and gave it a decided tilt to the West" (223). Given the Normans' multipolar policies of occasional alliances with North African polities and their incessant feuding with Venice, Byzantium, the papacy, and the German empire, this sweeping statement sits uneasily with such monolithic and arguably anachronistic markers as "West" and "East." What, exactly, is meant by "West" and "Western" at a time when Arabs and Greeks produced works for a Norman king?

As a military history, *Norman Naval Operations in the Mediterranean* is a learned and carefully researched book. Its most important contribution to the field is its masterful assimilation of numerous, not always accessible, chronicles and sources originally composed in French, Greek, Latin, and Arabic. In fact, the density of these sources throughout the book is staggering: with almost 1,700 footnotes spread over only 280 pages, the average page features no less than six footnotes. Conceptually the book's contribution is not as fully developed as it might have been. Fundamentally Stanton stops short of proposing a Norman *thalassocracy*, yet much of the book charts the emergence of a small, yet influential maritime empire. Perhaps a more encouraging view of the Mediterranean not as a theater of war but as a connecting sea—such as the model proposed by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell in *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (2000)—might offer a fuller context in which to explore Stanton's argument.

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KAREN SULLIVAN, *The Inner Lives of Medieval Inquisitors*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Pp. xi, 296. \$45. ISBN: 9780226781679. doi:10.1017/S0038713413000456

In this remarkable literary analysis of medieval inquisitors' writings, Karen Sullivan explores the range of conceptual frameworks through which seven different men interpreted the relationship between their professional office and Christian love. Pointing to

*Speculum* 88.1 (January 2013)